

Serial No.: 09/882,368
Docket No.: 70655.7900

REMARKS

Applicants reply to the Office Action dated December 5, 2005, within the shortened three month statutory period for reply. Claims 1, 3-4, and 6-17 were pending in the application and the Examiner rejects claims 1, 3-4, and 6-17. Support for the amendments may be found in the originally-filed specification, claims, and figures. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 3-4, and 6-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yagasaki, U.S. Patent No. 6,125,353. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Yagasaki generally discloses a system for categorizing various products into a searchable database, whereby online users may locate and purchase desired products. Specifically, the Yagasaki system is limited to a mall server that classifies products into a number of categories. Each category is accompanied with an effective period which determines when each product is available for search. For example, if a product is classified as "Halloween", then a "Halloween" category may only appear within a dropdown menu selector between the dates of September 1 through October 31. As a result, customers interacting with the Yagasaki system will only be able to search for products where the search date falls within the defined effective period for the product category. Such a system is described as resulting in a more authentic "mall-like" experience, wherein various product categories are only made available to shoppers during specific periods during the year.

The Examiner has directed Applicants to Figure 6 of Yagasaki as teaching Applicants' claim limitation of, "retrieving, by a host computer, product data from a plurality of websites...." Figure 6 of Yagasaki represents a databases table where product information is stored. The table comprises seven fields including, "product code", "product name", "unit price", "product description URL", "store code", "category code #1", and "category code #2". Applicants assume that the Examiner is particularly interested in the "product description URL" field as demonstrating that Yagasaki teaches retrieving product data from a plurality of websites.

Referring to Figure 6 of Yagasaki, the "product description URL" field is populated with several examples including, "/IDM0001/A01.htm", "/IDM0001/A02.htm", and "/IDM0001/A03.htm." Those skilled in the art would recognize each of these URL segments as a relative URL. A relative URL points to a resource relative to its context. In other words, if one were to access the URL, "http://www.bigmall.com", the page may include a number of relative URLs of the same domain.

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Because the base URL is already known (<http://www.bigmall.com>), the relative URL need not repeat the base URL to access a resource that is within the same base URL. Therefore, "<http://www.bigmall.com/IDM0001/A01.htm>" can be shortened to "/IDM0001/A01.htm" when the resource resides in the same domain and base URL.

Therefore, Figure 6 of Yagasaki and its supporting disclosure demonstrates that the product data relating to a plurality of products resides within the same URL domain. In order for Yagasaki to provide product data from a number of websites, the "product description URL" field would need to contain a base URL, rather than a relative URL. While those skilled in the art would understand the term "website" as being a collection of web pages connected within a single domain, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 for clarification. As such, Yagasaki does not disclose or suggest at least "retrieving, by a host computer, product data from a plurality of website domains associated with providers, wherein said providers include a plurality of at least one of affiliated and non-affiliated providers, wherein said product data is to be provided to a user," as recited by amended independent claim 1.

Claims 3-4 and 6-17 variously depend from independent claim 1. Applicants assert that dependent claims 3-4 and 6-17 are differentiated from the cited reference for at least the same reasons as set forth above, as well as their own respective features.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-2814. Applicants invite the Office to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner has any questions regarding this Reply or the present application in general.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

Howard Sobelman
Reg. No. 39,038

SNELL & WILMER L.L.P.
400 E. Van Buren
One Arizona Center
Phoenix, Arizona 85004
Phone: 602-382-6228
Fax: 602-382-6070
Email: hsobelman@swlaw.com

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